

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed March 26, 2003. By this Amendment, claims 18-31 are canceled and claims 1-2 and 5-17 are amended. Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. It is noted that Applicant has amended and cancelled the above-identified claims solely to advance prosecution of the instant application and to obtain allowance on allowable claims at the earliest possible date. Accordingly, no admission may be inferred from the amendments of claims herein. Applicant expressly reserves the right to pursue the originally filed claims in the future.

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent 6,120,908 to Papanu et al. (hereinafter Papanu). Papanu provides 12 examples in which a formulation is applied to the edges of glass samples cut from a larger glass sheet by scoring one of the major surfaces 18 as shown in figure 1 of the patent (Papanu column 9, lines 43-52). As noted by the Examiner, Papanu does not disclose the masking of the major surfaces 18 prior to the application of the formulation (Office Action page 3). Accordingly, the present rejection is based on the premise that it would have been obvious to the ordinarily skilled artisan to mask all areas other than the edges of the glass, since masking is commonly used to protect areas from an applied coating (Office Action page 3).

Applicant's inventive method as recited in amended claim 1, comprises the step of adhering a spacer to the second face of a first pane and to the first face of a second pane. A deposit forming material is then applied to the periphery of the first pane while a portion of the first pane is shielded by the second pane.

Unlike Applicant's claimed method, Papanu does not teach the step of applying a deposit forming material to a first pane while a portion of the first pane is shielded by a second pane. This step advantageously eliminates any need to apply sacrificial masking material to the second face of the first pane because it is shielded by the second pane.

Because Papanu does not disclose the step of applying a deposit forming material to a first pane while a portion of a first pane is shielded by a second pane, this patent does not teach every step of Applicant's claimed method. The fact that Applicant's claimed method eliminates any need to apply sacrificial masking material to the second face of the first pane shows that this method is a non-obvious improvement over the prior art. For these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 2 – 6 depend from claim 1 and recite additional limitations; Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

Claims 7-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent 6,120,908 to Papanu et al. and U.S. Patent 5,439,716 to Larsen. Larsen discloses a multiple pane insulating glass unit comprising a pair of parallel spaced glass panes represented by numerals 10 and 12 between which is sandwiched a spacer designated generally as 14. (Column 4, lines 62-64.)

The claims of Papanu recite a window having a frame and at least one window pane mounted in the frame (dependent claim 12 and independent claim 1). The window pane is a brittle oxide article having at least two major surfaces and at least one minor edge surface that is coated with a strengthening formulation. Papanu provides 12 examples in which a formulation is applied to the edges of glass samples cut from a larger glass sheet by scoring one of the major

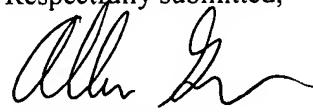
allowance. Claims 8 – 17 depend from claim 7 and recite additional limitations; Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, a sentence in the disclosure appearing on page 26, line 11-12 was objected to. This sentence reads “in figure 24, first mask 937 is shown overlaying masked portion 953 of the first face 927 of first pane 920.” The drawings were objected to because it appeared to the Examiner that reference characters “953” and “937” had both been used to designate the masked portion of the first face.

Applicant has carefully reviewed the specification and the drawings in light of the Examiners objection. Applicant agrees with the Examiner that reference character 953 is used to designate a masked portion of first face 927. Reference character 937, on the other hand, refers to a sheet of masking material that “may be selectively removed” from first face 927 (specification page 27, line 7). In figure 24, this sheet of masking material is shown overlaying first face 927. In light of this explanation, Applicant respectfully submits that amendment to the specification and the drawings is not required.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



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